

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph on page 12, lines 11-25, with the following paragraph:

Referring to Figure 3, a one-half inch wide length of magnetic tape 311 may contain up to 288 or more data tracks, such as data track 317, on multiple data stripes 312. A thin film magnetic read head is shown in upper position 313 and lower position 314 to read data from data tracks 312. If a tape read head has sixteen elements and, with movement of the head to multiple positions, each element can read nine tracks. In order to read more tracks, such as 288 in the desired configuration, two data bands 315 and 316 are utilized. The tape head is movable to nine tracking positions in each of upper position 313 and lower position 314. That is, with the tape head in position 313 it can read 144 tracks in data band 315 and in position 314 it can read 144 tracks in data band 316.

Please replace the paragraph on page 17, lines 3-10, with the following paragraph:

In one embodiment of the present invention, all tracks that have contained errors at some point, shown in block 514, are treated as erasures until the number of errors and erasures at some point on the medium is so large as to make the errors at that point uncorrectable. In such case, low-weight erasures are removed from the set of designated erasures until all of the errors can be corrected.